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Nestlé Purina PetCare Company

## **PURINA PRO PLAN RALLY TO RESCUE ASKS AMERICA TO VOTE FOR THE MOST REMARKABLE PET RESCUE SURVIVAL STORY**

***“Doing More for Pets” Rescue Stories Contest Puts Focus on Pet Adoption and Goal of Finding Homes for 300,000 Deserving Pets by the End of 2009***

**St. Louis (July 22, 2009)** – Some pet rescue stories drive people to tears; others end with smiles from ear to ear. Then there are those amazing stories that lead to both. Ten such stories represent the tales of some extraordinary dogs and cats that make up the finalists in the Purina® Pro Plan® Rally to Rescue® “Doing More™ for Pets” Rescue Stories Contest. America has the chance to vote for the most remarkable story, and the winner will be announced in November at the National Dog Show presented by Purina in the Philadelphia area.

This nationwide campaign from Purina’s Pro Plan brand promotes the amazing, but often untold, stories of pet rescue and raises awareness about its importance. “Doing More for Pets” honors rescued pets that have overcome great odds to survive and thrive under harrowing circumstances, thanks to the incredible hard work and dedication of small pet rescue organizations. One hundred and twenty one rescue stories were submitted, and a judging panel selected the 10 most inspiring success stories as finalists.

From July 15 through Oct. 30, pet lovers across the country can visit [www.rallytorescue.org](http://www.rallytorescue.org) to view the 10 finalist pet rescue stories and help make one canine or feline a star with their vote. The contest winner will be determined by a combination of a popular vote and judges score. The winning, rescue organization, rescue pet and owner featured in the story will win a trip to the National Dog Show. The pet rescue organization that submitted the winning story will receive \$5,000 in Purina® Pro Plan® brand pet food coupons.

“These 10 stories are truly moving and make you appreciate just how much life and love these pets still have to give,” said Heather Gettys, brand manager for Purina Pro Plan. “Each

story is incredible, and we're proud to help shine the light on these pets and the amazing people who rescued them."

### **Doing More for Pets Rescue Stories Contest Finalists**

Pets honored as the 10 finalists in the "Doing More for Pets" Rescue Stories Contest include:

- **Willow**, submitted by Ann Rutledge of the Dalmatian Rescue of North Texas (Dallas)
  - Willow was found hit by a car and all alone, scared with little hope. Yet just as quickly as Willow's life had become bad, some very caring people stepped in and helped it turn around for the best.
- **Robo**, submitted by Cindy Turtle of Saving Pyrs in Need (Granbury, Texas)
  - Just when a Great Pyrenees puppy needed a second chance, a concerned veterinarian and a devoted rescue group were able to help provide the care and compassion he deserved.
- **Chase**, submitted by Sara Fishburn of Impact for Animals (St. Louis)
  - When a rescue group heard of an abandoned dog dumped on the streets, they gathered their friends and made it their mission to get him out of the cold and into the warm, loving home he deserved.
- **Buddy**, submitted by Ellen Pfender of American Lhasa Club Rescue (Everett, Pa.)
  - When a very sick dog was surrendered by a family who couldn't afford his medical bills, a devoted rescue group stepped in. They not only ensured Buddy received the care he needed, but found him a new family to love again as well.
- **Paxton**, submitted by Mary Westburg of Maine Coon Adoptions (Piedmont, Calif.)
  - Thanks to the kind spirit of one special person, a cat named Paxton who started out on a rugged path was able to find a road that led to love, compassion and a new friend just like himself.
- **Faith**, submitted by Pam Mayes of Alabama Pug Rescue (Birmingham, Ala.)
  - Neglected for weeks after being hit by a car and seriously injured, a boxer named Faith found love through a Pug rescue willing to extend their warm hearts.
- **Lucky Seven**, submitted by Linda Schaffer of Operation Wildcats (Chittenango, N.Y.)
  - When seven cats from New York City were in desperate need of a new home, fate stepped in and gave them a chance at a whole new life – out on the farm.
- **Elizabeth**, submitted by Kim Bolster of Mid-Atlantic Springer Spaniel Rescue (Richmond, Va.)

- After an injured Springer Spaniel was found lying on the side of the road, one person's heartless cruelty was instantly outweighed by the love, care and generosity of many others.
- **Pearce**, submitted by Janice Bailey of Lab Rescue of Oklahoma (Broken Arrow, Okla.)
  - The simple, forgiving nature of a dog was all it took for a mistreated black lab to make his way out of harm and into the lives of a family he truly deserved.
- **Bojangles**, submitted by Cindy Turtle of Saving Pyrs in Need (Granbury, Tx.)
  - Almost no one thought the extremely sick Great Pyrenees dog had a chance – except for one rescue group. They did everything they could to save him, and their dedication paid off.

### **Pro Plan Rally to Rescue**

The Pro Plan Rally to Rescue program is a partnership with Purina Pro Plan brand pet food and pet rescue organizations across the country. The program helps give rescue pets the nutrition and care they need and the loving homes they deserve. Pro Plan is committed to Doing More to support smaller pet rescue organizations that often may have been overlooked by donors or adopters due to limited fundraising and marketing efforts.

Since the inception of Rally to Rescue in 2005, more than 227,000 pets have found loving, forever homes. But, there is still much more work to do and Rally to Rescue is dedicated to reaching its goal of 300,000 adoptions by the end of 2009.

### **Pro Plan Rally Across America**

To help achieve the program's 300,000 adoption goal, Rally to Rescue is hitting the road traveling to eight cities across the country via the Purina Pro Plan Rally Across America 2009 tour. At the events, local residents will have the opportunity to learn more about pet rescue and adopt dogs and cats from local Ambassador organizations. In addition, event goers will receive training tips from Purina® Pro Plan® trainer Melissa Heeter and her rescue dog Viola. Heeter will provide customized training techniques based on the different personalities of rescue pets. Pet owners can use these techniques at home with their own pets or their newest four-legged friend.

### **Doing More for Ambassadors Nationwide**

Smaller pet rescue organizations help place nearly half a million dogs and cats in homes each year and represent nearly 45 percent of all pet adoption agencies. However, they often don't receive the attention or funding they so desperately need. In addition to the Rally Across

America tour, Rally to Rescue Ambassadors will host adoption and fundraising events at pet retailers across the country throughout the summer and fall. Ambassadors will have adoptable pets on-site, Rally to Rescue T-shirts, with four unique designs for sale and information about how to get involved in and help local pet rescue efforts. Whether it's volunteering, donating funds or pet care items, or adopting a furry friend, every little bit helps to make a difference in a pet's life.

To find a pet rescue event near you, view the complete stories and vote in the "Doing More for Pets" Rescue Stories Contest or to apply to become a Rally to Rescue Ambassador, visit [www.rallytorescue.org](http://www.rallytorescue.org).

Nestlé Purina PetCare Company promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., the world's largest food company. Rally to Rescue is not a 501(c)(3) organization.

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